

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### **Can county or regional government agencies apply for funding?**

Due to the limited amount of funding, regional and county governments are not eligible to apply, nor are colleges/universities or other non-municipal entities. In the future, if a higher level of funding can be secured, county and regional bicycle and pedestrian planning activities will become eligible.

### **Can a municipality apply for funding for both a bicycle plan and a pedestrian plan?**

Proposals for development of a combined bicycle/pedestrian plan will not be accepted, as the considerations, issues, needs, facilities and programs for each user group are different. Municipalities may choose to apply for funding to undertake either a bicycle plan or a pedestrian plan in any given fiscal year. Municipalities may apply for funding for the other type of plan in subsequent years.

### **Can a municipality that already has a plan apply for funding?**

Municipalities who currently have a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian plan at least five (5) years old may apply for funding. Also, supplementing/updating an existing plan is an eligible category for funding. Most North Carolina municipalities do not have both a comprehensive bicycle plan and a comprehensive pedestrian plan. Typically, existing plans may target just off-road projects, as in a greenway master plan, or just on-road improvements as part of an existing transportation plan. Such plans typically do not address policy, education, enforcement, maintenance, and land use/development issues. If you have an existing plan, please see the Plan Outline and Plan Template for information on recommended plan content.

[http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/planning\\_grant/guide.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/guide.html)

### **If a proposal was submitted in a previous grant cycle, can the same proposal be resubmitted?**

The application is slightly modified every year to clarify/improve both the application process and the review process. Therefore, a new application form must be submitted to be eligible for consideration each year. All municipalities are encouraged to re-apply. Those municipalities that received funding in previous years may apply for the type of plan, bicycle or pedestrian, for which they did not receive funding in the past.

### **Can the bicycle plan or pedestrian plan focus on a sub-area of a municipality?**

Funding is intended to support the development of a comprehensive, bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan for the entire municipality. The development of project and program action priorities is an important part of the plan and may bring focus to particular areas of highest need. However, it is important that these action priorities are developed within the context of a municipality-wide bicycle or pedestrian transportation system.

### **Can the funding be used to develop a bicycle or pedestrian element of other municipal planning efforts?**

Any plan developed with these funds must be comprehensive in nature and be a stand-alone bicycle or pedestrian plan. While NCDOT encourages the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in local comprehensive plans, transportation plans, land use plans, recreation plans, greenway and open space plans, etc., requests for funding to develop such elements are not within the scope of this grant.

### **Can the funds be used to develop a plan for a specific construction project?**

This funding is available for the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan only. Such a planning effort encompasses the entire municipal jurisdiction and provides guidance on how the municipality can develop and implement a variety of projects and initiatives to improve the bicycle or pedestrian environment over time.

### **What is the difference between a project plan and a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan?**

A comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan is much larger in scope than a project plan and develops recommendations for short, mid and long range projects and initiatives to improve the bikability and walkability of the community. Such a plan identifies construction projects, policy and guideline recommendations, education and enforcement programs and awareness and encouragement initiatives. A project plan typically focuses on a single corridor and outlines the considerations and design details for construction of the project.

**Is development of just a sidewalk plan, greenway plan or bicycle route plan eligible for funding?**

These types of plans are a desirable aspect of an overall comprehensive plan, but are only part of the overall study of the opportunities to improve bicycle or pedestrian transportation in a municipality.

**How is the funding awarded?**

The grant funding is provided on a cost reimbursement basis. Municipalities receiving awards will be reimbursed for actual expenditures, up to the funding cap maximum.

**How is the amount of the local match determined?**

NCDOT planning grant funds will be provided on a sliding scale, based on municipal population, as shown in the table below:

Municipal Population	DOT Participation	Local Participation
Less than 10,000	80%	20%
10,000 to 50,000	70%	30%
50,000 to 100,000	60%	40%
Over 100,000	60%	50%

**Can in-kind services be used for a local match?**

In-kind services cannot be used for local participation. The local match must be a cash contribution.

**Can other non-municipal funds be used for the local cash match?**

Other NCDOT state or federal funds provided to a municipality cannot be used as a local cash match. Funds secured from other state or federal agencies and organizations or businesses may be used for the local match.

**Can Powell Bill funds be used for a local match?**

The Powell Bill Fund is distributed from the Highway Fund and run through NCDOT. Therefore, it cannot be used as a local match. Funds secured from state agencies other than NCDOT may be used for a local match.

**How much does a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian plan cost to develop?**

Average costs associated with the development of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans vary greatly depending on whether the plan is prepared by a consultant or by a combination of consultant and staff. A range of estimated costs for plans developed by consultants is shown below. Expenditures for plans that are developed with limited assistance by consultants would be less. For plans that cost more than the averages listed in the table below, the municipality must agree to pay the amount over the NCDOT cap, also shown below:

Population	Estimated Consultant Costs	
	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>
Less than 10,000	\$25,000-35,000	\$25,000-31,000
	\$35,000-65,000	\$30,000-45,000
50,000 to 100,000	\$65,000-95,000	\$45,000-65,000
Over 100,000	\$95,000-190,000	\$65,000-95,000

**What is the maximum amount of funding a municipality can receive?**

Population	NCDOT Funding Cap	
	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>
Less than 10,000	\$28,000	\$24,800
10,000 to 50,000	\$45,500	\$31,500
50,000 to 100,000	\$57,000	\$39,000
Over 100,000	\$95,000	\$47,500

**Is any preference given to municipalities who request less than the maximum amount?**

No preference or priority is given to applicants that request less than the maximum amount. Municipalities are encouraged to request the appropriate amount of funding necessary to produce a quality plan, up to the funding cap.

**When will selected municipalities receive the funding?**

Funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis. Municipalities will be notified of the planning grant award in early June. A municipality selected for funding must execute a legal agreement (Municipal Reimbursement Agreement) with the NCDOT prior to receiving funding authorization. This agreement will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement and the deliverables. Municipalities have six months to complete all steps necessary in order to be issued a Notice to Proceed. Work cannot begin until the municipality receives a formal Notice to Proceed from NCDOT. A Notice to Proceed is issued once the following conditions are met:

- 1) The Municipal Reimbursement Agreement is executed
- 2) A list of potential steering committee members has been submitted to NCDOT
- 3) An executed consultant contract with approved scope of work and cost proposal has been submitted to NCDOT. Costs incurred before receipt of a Notice to Proceed are not a reimbursable expense.

**What is the time frame for executing a reimbursement agreement between NCDOT and a funded municipality?**

Once a municipality is notified of award, NCDOT will generate a municipal reimbursement agreement and forward it to the municipality for execution. Some municipalities will need more time to execute their agreement, but all municipalities must complete this task, submit a list of potential steering committee members and an executed contract so that the NTP can be issued within six months of award notification. An extension of three months may be granted with approval from NCDOT.

**How long will the municipality have to complete the plan?**

Awarded municipalities will have eighteen months to complete their plan, starting when the MRA has been executed. An extension of six months may be granted with approval by NCDOT.

**How will proposals be selected for funding?**

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for completeness and general appropriateness. An Awards Committee will review all proposals that pass the initial screening and will forward their funding recommendations to the NCDOT for final approval. The Awards Committee will include DBPT staff and individuals with professional experience in developing, administering, and / or implementing bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. These individuals will represent municipalities of varying sizes, MPO's and RPO's, COG's and other appropriate agencies and organizations. The Board of Transportation will approve selected municipalities in May.

**What are the selection criteria?**

The NCDOT Planning Grant Awards Committee will review each proposal and evaluate it based on the stated vision, goals and needs of the municipality; comprehensiveness of scope; understanding of issues and opportunities; level of local commitment; and, feasibility of successful plan completion. For a comprehensive list of criteria, see the Selection Criteria section of the Program Overview.

([http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/planning\\_grant/overview.html#criteria](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/overview.html#criteria))

**What type of assistance is available to local staff preparing a proposal?**

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) will be available to answer questions and provide guidance. (Helen Chaney, [hmchaney@ncdot.gov](mailto:hmchaney@ncdot.gov), 919-807-0780) MPO and RPO planning staff may also be able to provide helpful information or staff assistance. In addition, links to Web sites that provide general information on bicycle and pedestrian planning and a list of exemplary plans are posted on our Resources page.

([http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/planning\\_grant/links.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/links.html)) A recommended Plan Outline and Expanded Template have been prepared to guide municipalities in the development of their plan.

([http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/planning\\_grant/guide.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/guide.html))

**Is the funding provided on an "all or nothing" basis?**

Yes. Applications for funding for a comprehensive municipal bicycle or pedestrian plan from a municipality that can provide the necessary level and type of matching funds are the only type of proposals that will be considered.

**What does a good bicycle plan or pedestrian plan look like?**

Check the Resource section for information and links to exemplary plans.

([http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/planning\\_grant/links.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planning_grant/links.html))

**Can the funds be used for construction of sidewalks, greenway trails or other capital improvements projects?**

These funds are made available for the development of comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation plans only. Proposals detailing specific construction projects are not eligible for consideration.